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## AFCI Protection of Residential Circuits In Existing Dwellings

Section 210.12 of the 2011 National Electrical Code requires Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) protection of <u>all newly installed</u> 125-volt, 15 & 20 ampere outlets in family rooms, dining rooms, living rooms, parlors, libraries, dens, bedrooms, sunrooms, recreation rooms, closets, hallways, or similar rooms or areas of a dwelling unit. These "outlets" include, but are not limited to, light fixtures, smoke detectors, receptacles, etc. This section also requires extensions and modifications to the branch circuit, <u>in these areas</u>, to be arc fault protected.

St. Paul will enforce this as follows:

- 1. All new dwellings or dwelling units will be required to have AFCI protection for all circuits as required in 210.12.
- 2. New areas of a dwelling (such as additions) in existing dwellings will also need AFCI protection for all outlets if required by 210.12.
- 3. New outlets installed in existing dwelling units will require AFCI protection if covered by 210.12. Existing outlets may remain as is or may optionally be AFCI protected.
- 4. If the only electrical work done in a dwelling is adding a hard-wired smoke detector for sale of the dwelling, since this requirement is a local ordinance and not a requirement of the NEC, we will not require that the new smoke detector be protected by an AFCI breaker. If any other work besides the smoke detector is performed, then we will require any new smoke detector to be on an AFCI-protected circuit, plus all other new work that would be covered by this section.

At present, the only means of AFCI protection is by using an AFCI circuit-breaker. These AFCI breakers must be of the "combination" type which is indicated on the breaker itself. In the case of fuse panels in existing dwellings, this may require a circuit-breaker sub-panel in order to conform to this Section.

Note: Please see Section 210.12 and other pertinent sections of the 2011 National Electrical Code for further information on this and other requirements. We do not have copies available, check with your local library or electrical supply house.